

BANKS FLYING FOX

What are they called?

Scientific:

Pteropus fundatus

English: Banks Flying fox

French: volpe volante
delle Banks

Bislama: Smol Waet
flaeng fokis

local language:

What do they look like?

The body of these bat are about 15 cm long. They are the smallest of all the flying foxes in Vanuatu. They have greyish-brown colourations on the head and the back. The mantles are yellow-orange while their undersides are yellow-grey.

There are not many photographs of the Banks Flying Fox. They look similar to the Vanuatu Flying fox, but they are much smaller and have shorter teeth.

A little bit about them:

These are small fruit bats. They are endemic to Vanuatu and are only found on Mota and Vanua Lava in the Banks group. They roost in trees individually or in small groups.

We don't know much about their biology or ecology because they haven't been studied very much by scientists. They have been seen feeding on coconut flowers and the fruit of Vaveli tree.

Did you know?

- They live in a very small area, one of the smallest areas of any flying fox in the world.

Banks flying fox are classified as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List.

Why are they threatened?

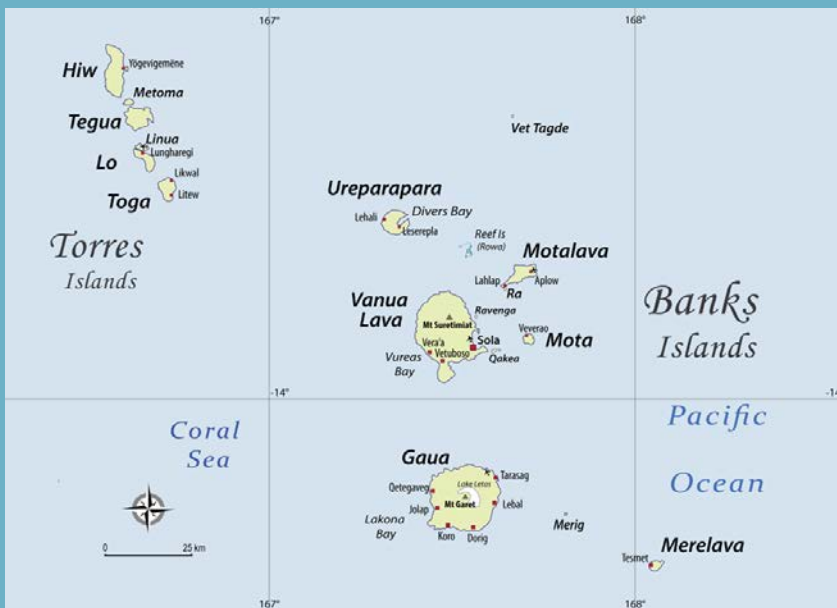
- They only live on two small islands which are close together so if any disaster happens such as a cyclone it could wipe out the whole population of these flying foxes.
- Habitat loss from natural disasters and land clearing for agriculture and gardens.
- They may be hunted for food.

What do they do for us?

- They pollinate many plants including food producing plants.
- They disperse seeds. This can be important for reestablishing vegetation after disturbance such as cyclones.
- As they fly they can cycle nutrients around the forest.
- The guano can be used as a fertilizer.
- Roosting sites could be tourist attractions.

What can we do for them?

- ✓ Identify roosting sites and protect them.
- ✓ Find out more about them – observe where they live, what they feed on and when they have their babies.
- ✓ Take pictures and record when you see them.
- ✓ Report the sightings and observations to VESS or DEPC.
- ✓ If people want to eat flying fox they should hunt the pacific flying fox (also know as the black flying fox) as it is not threatened with extinction and not eat the flying foxes that are threatened including the Bank's Flying Fox.



Want to know more?

- ❖ Read more on the book **Mammals of the South-West Pacific & the Moluccan Islands** by Tim Flannery.
- ❖ Visit: www.iucnredlist.org

